I DON'T MIND HELPING.
CHAPTER 10: THE DWARVEN GIRL
T-TOMBOY SPOTTED!
ABSOLUTELY NOT, KATIA!
YOU'RE STILL AN APPREN-TICE!
I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO LEAVE THE VILLAGE!
FLINCH

PLEASE, CHIEF!
IT'S ONLY FOR A WEEK! AND SHE'LL BE WELL COMPEN-SATED!
AREN'T I THE ONE FOOTING THE BILL?
I'M AFRAID THAT I CANNOT GRANT YOUR REQUEST.
THIS IS THE WAY OF OUR VILLAGE.
ALL APPRENTICES MUST REMAIN HERE UNTIL THEY ARE READY.
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GRADUATE FROM APPRENTICE?

ONE MUST PROVE THEIR WORTH BY PROCURING A SPECIAL ORE...
AND USING IT TO FORGE A WEAPON.
THAT SAID, THE GIRL DOES HAVE THE NECESSARY SKILLS.
THEN WHY HASN'T SHE ALREADY RETRIEVED THE ORE?
THE ORIGINAL PLAN WAS TO HAVE HER GO LAST MONTH, ON HER BIRTHDAY.
BECAUSE OF THE WAR, THOUGH, WE HAVE OTHER PRIORITIES. WE CAN'T SPARE THE GUARDS NEEDED TO TAKE HER TO THE MINES.
GUARDS?

YES. IN TRUTH, THE MINE IS ACTUALLY A VAST DUNGEON.
WE SEND MEN TO EXPLORE WHILE THEY PROTECT THE APPRENTICES.
I SEE. SO...
Grin
SHE CAN GO IF WE SUPPLY THE GUARDS, CORRECT?
...!

THE CAVERN MINES.
Staying back.
You don't need me there, I'll be drinking until you're back.
Will she be okay?
WOOSH
WOOSH
GOT IT.
THANKS FOR SCOUTING AHEAD.
THAT'S A CLIFF! WE WALK THIS WAY!
Poke
Poke

MAN, THEY'RE REALLY GOOD AT THIS.
I GUESS THAT RABBIT NIGHT VISION REALLY HELPS.
WHSH
WHSH
WHSH
H-HEY, WHO ARE THOSE GIRLS?
OH, I FORGOT TO TELL YOU.
THEY'RE CALLED PALMTOP RABBITS, AND...
P-PALM... TOP... RAB...
KATIA!
Tremble
Tremble
Tremble
Shake
Shake
Shake
IS THIS THE NORMAL REACTION?

ADAMANTITE MONSTERS?
RIGHT.
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR.
SO, YOU JUST KILL THEM AND MINE THE ORE?
NO, WE DON'T MINE THE ORE. THEY GIVE IT TO US.
ADAMANTITE IS VERY RARE, SO YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO FIND ANY JUST BY DIGGING AWAY.
SURELY THEY AREN'T JUST GIVING IT AWAY FOR FREE, RIGHT?
It wouldn't make for much of a trial if they did.
SWP

THESE MONSTERS HAVE A HABIT OF ABSORBING ENCHANTED METAL OBJECTS INTO THEIR BODIES.
CHK
WE CAN TRADE THIS FOR THE ORE.
INTO THEIR BODIES? WHY?
APPARENTLY, THEY TAKE THE MAGICAL ENERGY IMBUED IN THESE WEAPONS...
AND EITHER CONSUME THEM AS NUTRIENTS, OR SIMPLY MAKE THEMSELVES STRONGER.
ANYWAY, THE TRADITION GOES WAY BACK.
HUH.
Strange creatures.

WOW, THAT SMELLS AMAZING...
I'VE GOT SOME FOR YOU, TOO, OF COURSE.
EVER HEARD OF CURRY?
CURRY?
TRUST ME, IT'LL SURPRISE YOU~!
Boil-in-the-bag curry rice
Ingredients: Rice
Boil-in-the-bag curry base

...
Munch
Munch
IT'S NOT GONNA KILL YOU.
Nom
...

Munch
Munch
Munch
!!!
Gasp
Empty
I'VE NEVER HAD ANYTHING SO DELICIOUS IN MY LIFE...
IT'S JUST BOIL-IN-THE-BAG, YOU KNOW...
WANT SECONDS?
SWP

Absolutely!

yawn~
PHEW. GOODNIGHT, EVERYONE.
Shuffle
Shuffle
Mmh...
Master, can we?

Mmm...
Smooch ♡
Smooch ♡
!!!!!!
......
...
Fwip
AH.
WHOOPS, I FORGOT.
SHOULDN'T BE EXPOSING A CHILD TO ALL THIS, SHOULD WE...
...
Badump
Badump
Badump
Badump
Meanwhile, Maria...
Zzz
Zzz
Ahh, Tatsuya-sama! ♡ My heart yearns for your touch~

Fwahh
MORNING...
Bubble
Bubble
KATIA?!
W-WHAT HAPPENED?!
U-UM... DO YOU GUYS...
ALWAYS DO THAT STUFF BEFORE YOU SLEEP?
!
W-WELL, I CAN'T REALLY SAY NO...
BEFORE WE SLEEP AND AS SOON AS WE WAKE UP, I GUESS...
Here.
Thanks.
HUH...
I MEAN...

YOU ALL SEEM...
PRETTY CLOSE.
SSSP
YOU THINK? HA HA...
TO BE HONEST...
THE BIRTH RATES FOR US DWARVES ARE GOING DOWN...
AND THERE AREN'T ANY BOYS AROUND MY AGE.
I'M ALSO KINDA...
INTERESTED.
HM?
FLUSH

S-SO, I'M INTER-ESTED, BUT...
THERE'S NO ONE AROUND.
Badump
Badump
LIKE KI...
K-KI...
KICK?
KISSING!
I W-WANT TO TRY IT!
MY HEART STARTED RACING LAST NIGHT AND I COULDN'T GET ANY SLEEP!
I SPENT THE WHOLE NIGHT JUST WAITING FOR YOU TO WAKE UP!
Shake
Shake
H-HEY, COME ON, CALM DOWN.

S-SO, WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
BECAUSE WE DWARVES DEVOTE OUR-SELVES TO SMITHING...
WE INSTINCTIVELY KNOW WHEN SOMEONE IS WORTHY TO WIELD OUR WEAPONS.
I'M SURE THE OTHER GIRLS ARE DRAWN TO YOU FOR THE SAME REASON.
NOPE, STILL DON'T GET IT.
LIKE I SAID!
I DON'T HAVE ANYONE TO DO IT WITH!
I DIDN'T GET ANY SLEEP AT ALL LAST NIGHT!
SORRY...

I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
!!!
POUT
Fwap
UGH!
WELL, FINE! I DON'T CARE ANY-MORE!
I'M GOING TO BED!
HEY...
C'MON, WE'RE ABOUT TO LEAVE.
Tmp

GET HIM!
LET'S FUCK 'EM UP!
GA HA HA! NONE CAN STAND AGAINST OUR MIGHT!
I AM BECOME DEATH!
TASTE OUR RAGE!
SPURT
SPURT
AMAZING...
Shiver
HA HA HA...
WELL, IT'S A GOOD THING THEY'RE CLEARING THE WAY FOR US, AT LEAST.
LOOK, LOOK!
WHAT'S THAT?!

Snort
Snort
Snort
WHAT KIND OF BOAR IS THAT?!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE BEFORE!
IT'S A NEW SPECIES!
IS IT TASTY?!
Flee
AFTER IT!
THD THD THD
HEY, GUYS! HOLD UP!
THD
THD THD THD THD

OFF ON ANOTHER RAMPAGE…
HA HA HA!
BUT LOOK!
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

LOOM
HARK! I AM THE ADAMANTITE KING.
THIS THE GUY?
I AM THE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF THE DWARF CHIEF!

IN KEEPING WITH OUR ANCIENT CONTRACT...
I AM HERE TO ASK FOR SOME ADA-MANTITE!
...
I AM AFRAID I CANNOT.
HUH?!

WHY NOT?!
I THOUGHT WE HAD A CONTRACT!
I FEAR MY ADAMANTITE ...
HAS BEEN PLUNDERED.
THERE IS A LIMIT TO HOW MUCH ADAMANTITE MY SURFACE CAN GENERATE.
WERE I TO LOSE ANY MORE, I WOULD NOT BE LONG FOR THIS WORLD.
PLUN-DERED?
BY WHO?!
A GROUP OF MISCREANTS ...
DWELLING DEEP IN THE CAVERN DEPTHS.

They are human...
But it would seem they are conducting alchemical research.
So, these alchemists are hoarding all the ore...
These people stole the adamantite from you without asking, right?
You don't mind if we take it back by force, do you?
I do not.
But be warned.
I, the ruler of these mines, suffered defeat at their hands...

They are in the company of a hero from another world.
From another world?
If I recall...
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
His name was Miyamoto...
A young man.
MIYAMOTOOOO!

CAVERN DEPTHS.

CLANG
CLANG
Huff
Wheeze
Wheeze
RATTLE RATTLE
wobble wobble
RATTLE
Huff
Huff
THIS IS HORRIBLE...
THEY MUST BE SLAVES.
EVERY ONE OF THEM IS ON DEATH'S DOOR.
HM?
OH?
HEY, LOOK WHO IT IS!

BEEN A WHILE, POPS!
MIYA...
MOTO ...!
GRIND
GRIND
SLINK

WOOSH

STILL ALIVE, HUH?
YOU LITTLE...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE CAPITAL, TRAINING TO BECOME A WARRIOR.
RIGHT, ABOUT THAT.
SEE, THE GUARDS THERE...

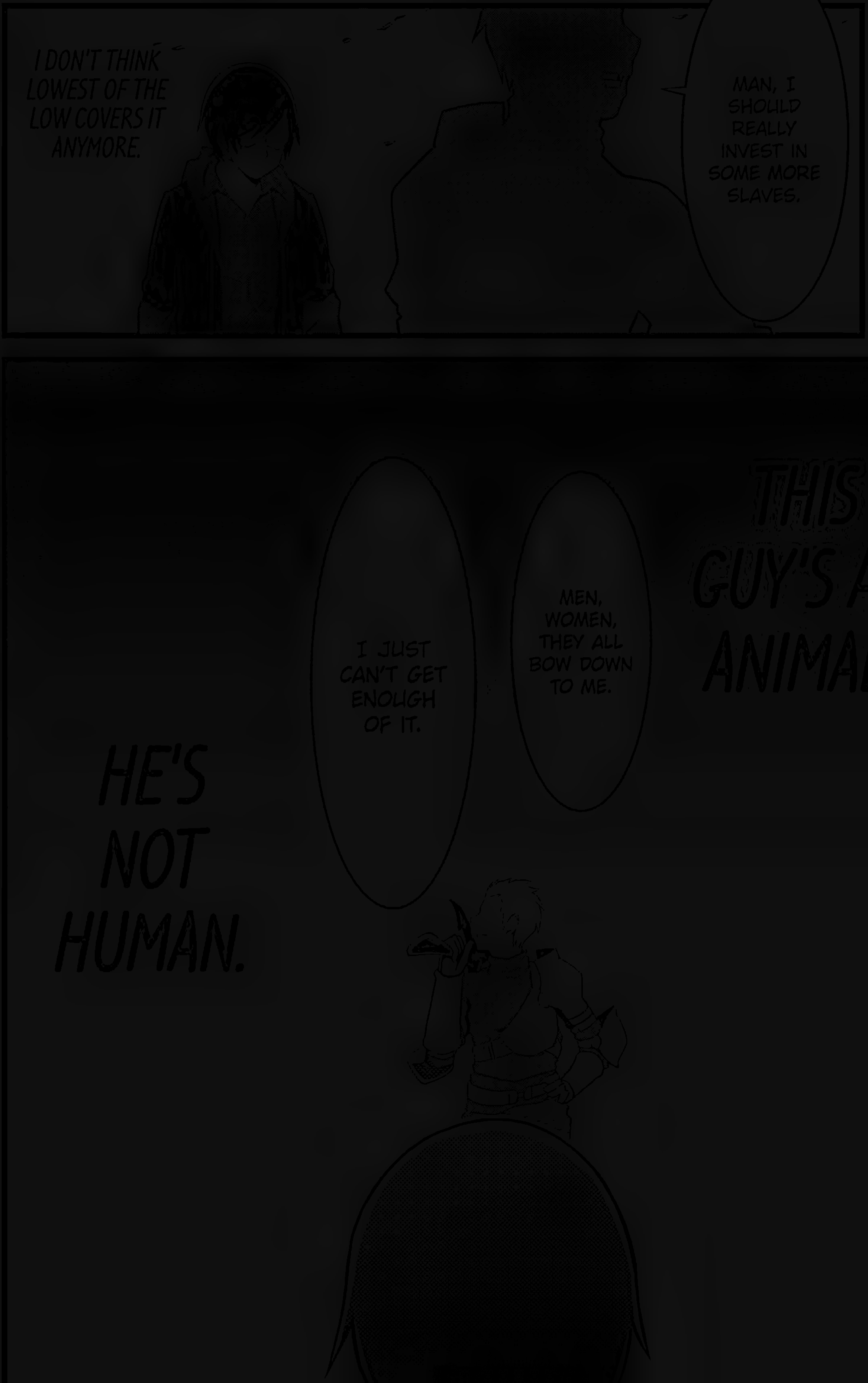
THEIR TRAINING WAS LIKE, INSANE.
HAD SOME OF THE GUYS PISSING BLOOD, YOU KNOW?
I AIN'T PUTTING UP WITH THAT. SO, I FIGURED I'D BAIL AFTER I GOT A LITTLE STRONGER.
...
AIN'T NOTHING WORSE THAN HARD WORK, YOU GET ME?
I CAN LEAVE THAT TO THE REST!
I MEAN, I'M STRONG ENOUGH FOR B-RANK NOW, SO...
I CAN KINDA DO WHATEVER I WANT, MORE OR LESS!

MAN...
I ALREADY THOUGHT THE GUY WAS A SCUMBAG...
BUT HE'S THE LOWEST OF THE LOW.
SO, ANY-WAY.
I LEFT THE CITY...
BUT I COULDN'T FIND A GUILD WILLING TO TAKE IN A RUNAWAY HERO.
THAT'S WHEN I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE UNDER-GROUND GUILDS.
UNDER-GROUND?
GUILDS FOR CRIMINALS, BASICALLY.

THIS OLD MAN'S ALCHEMY RESEARCH ISN'T EXACTLY ABOVE BOARD...
SO I GOT HIRED TO COVER FOR HIM WHILE HE GETS HIS ORE.
I SEE.
WELL, AT LEAST YOU'VE SAVED ME THE TROUBLE OF CONFIRMING THAT YOU'RE CRIMINALS.
HA HA!
LET ME SHOW YOU A LITTLE SOMETHING, POPS.
wave
wave
Stagger
Stagger
WOOSH

CRACK
GACK! AGH...
SLUMP
!!!...

A HA HA HA! HILARIOUS. RIGHT?!
THIS WORLD DOESN'T HAVE JUSTICE, IT HAS MONEY AND POWER!
SMACK
WHACK
LOOK AT HIS SLAVE CREST!
YOU CAN PUNCH AND KICK HIM ALL YOU WANT...
AND HE'LL NEVER FIGHT BACK!
ISN'T IT JUST THE BEST?!
THUNK
SMACK
...
BAS-TARD...
Tremble
Tremble
HEH...
WANNA SEE WHAT HAPPENS...
WHEN I BREAK HIS FINGERS?
Huff
Huff


MAN, I SHOULD REALLY INVEST IN SOME MORE SLAVES.
I DON'T THINK LOWEST OF THE LOW COVERS IT ANYMORE.
THIS GUY'S AN ANIMAL.
MEN, WOMEN, THEY ALL BOW DOWN TO ME.
I JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT.
HE'S NOT HUMAN.

BY THE WAY, POPS.
WHO'S THAT CUTE-ASS MAID YOU GOT THERE?
MY NAME IS OURO-BOROS.
I HANDLE MY MASTER'S EVERYDAY NECESSITIES.
Sigh
LISTEN, LADY...
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT INTO THAT MESS, BUT YOU SHOULD QUIT.
HE'S AN OLD MAN, INSIDE AND OUT.
AND, GET THIS, HE'S ONLY GOT FARMING SKILLS!
HE'S TRASH, THROUGH AND THROUGH.
...

USE YOUR BRAIN AND COME WITH ME!
I'M THE STRONGEST, MOST HANDSOME YOUNG GUY AROUND!
WELL?
HOW ABOUT WE GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER OVER SOME COFFEE BY THAT TENT?
OH NO...
SHE HAD EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO INTER-RUPT HIM THERE...
BUT I THINK SHE'S TOO ANGRY FOR THAT.
MASTER.
I CAN TASTE THE BILE IN MY THROAT ALREADY.
MAY I KILL HIM?

NO, HANG ON...
HE'S A SCUM-BAG, BUT I CAN'T KILL HIM.
Hah... Okay, calm down.
AS YOU WISH.
I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR HIM.
STEP INTO THE REAL WORLD, AND NO ONE'LL GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY.
C'MON, DON'T SAY THAT!
IT'S JUST A LITTLE COFFEE! WHADDYA SAY?
I GUESS BEING THE DELINQUENT TYPE WILL ATTRACT SOME OF THE YOUNGER GIRLS, BUT...
THE GUY ACTUALLY THINKS IT'LL WORK ON ADULTS...
GRAB
THERE'S NO WAY YOU'D TAKE THAT OLD MAN OVER ME.
...

POP
POP
POP
POP
POP!
POP
POP
POP
CRAP, SHE CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE!
SHE'S REALLY GONNA KILL HIM!
POP
POP
OURO-BOROS!
He he~!
What a catch!

PUT IT IN THE STORAGE CHEST, TATSUYA-!
SONIA!
Slide
Slide
HOW...

THROB
Does a girl that cute...
Even exist?!
THROB
Rustle
Rustle

TMP
TMP
!
I'M A HERO!
I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT! I WANT YOU!
YOU'LL HAVE ALL THE MONEY AND FAME YOU COULD EVER ASK FOR!
Thad
THAT'S YOUR BEST PICK-UP LINE?!
Hey, I got a word in this time!

He he! I'm gonna puke~!
BLURGH!
THWACK
SMASH
THUD
THUNK
Twitch
NGH...
Twitch

OH NO, I GOT SCUM ON MY LEGS!
I'LL HAVE TO WASH THEM LATER~
Wipe
Wipe
...
SAY WHAT YOU WILL ABOUT ME...
TAP
TAP
Tug
Dangle
BUT I WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY MOCKERY OF MY MASTER.

SLAP
AGH?!
HUH?!
I NEVER SAID SHE COULD DO THAT...
I GUESS SHE GOT CARRIED AWAY AFTER WATCHING SONIA...
YOU BELIEVE YOURSELF TO BE THE WORLD'S GREATEST HERO...
AND YET A SINGLE KICK FROM SONIA RENDERED YOU UNCON-SCIOUS.

SLAP
YOU HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.
BRGH!
SMACK
FORGET MY MASTER AND CORNELIA-SAMA.
UNGH!
SLAP
EVEN I COULD BUTCHER YOU IN AN INSTANT.
HRGH!
ANYTHING LEFT UNDONE?
BASH
GAH!
I DO HOPE YOU HAVE WRITTEN A WILL.
SMASH
GUH!
IF YOU HAVEN'T, I'M AFRAID IT IS TOO LATE NOW.
GAH!
SPLAT
SPLAT
Ew.

THE MAGGOT LEARNED TO BEG, DID IT?
GYAH!
FORGIBE ME...
F-FOR...
PLEA...
SPLAT
FNGH!
MAY I SUGGEST YOU SEEK THEM OUT IN THE PITS OF HELL?
SMACK
WHATEVER BECAME OF THOSE TAUNTS OF YOURS?
PHGH!
SMACK
Can't let the kid see this...
Fwp
Shiver
ZTOP...
PLEA...
SPLAT
MAYHAP YOU SHOULD OFFER THEM TO LORD ANUBIS!
Splurt
Splurt

NAGH!
SMASH
KRK
CRACK

Ouro-boros.
Let's leave it at that, okay?
…
He's right! You don't want any scum on your hands~!
MUSH
Sonia… you could have said that a little sooner.
Brgh…
We should tie him up…
And get Arisa to turn him in to the guards, so he can pay for his crimes.
I doubt he'll get off easy for deserting his training.
Wipe
Wipe
Guh…
Shake
Shake

CRAWL
CRAWL
Y-YOU'RE... M-MONSTERS... AGH...
WOW. YOU'VE STILL GOT THE STRENGTH TO CRAWL?
FUCK... NGH... YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS...
SKRR
ONCE I'M... HEALED... I'M GONNA...
CRUSH
AH.

?
?
Hmph!

DAMN.
RIGHT ON THE LAND MINE.
LITTLE ONES...
ARE YOU READY~?

WE'RE TURNING HIM TO DUST.
AM I CLEAR?
OKAY, HE'S DEAD.
DEAD AS A DODO.
SEE YOU, MIYA-MOTO.